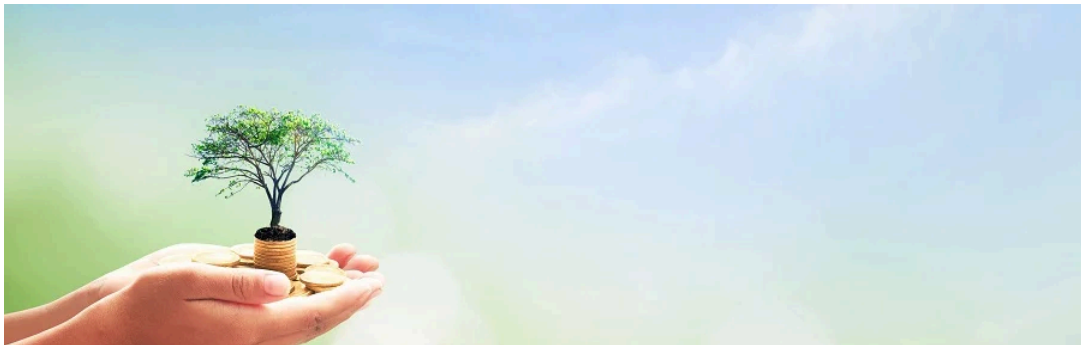

Week ending 9 November 2024

Connect

The bulletin for clergy, lay leaders and all who are the Church in the Diocese of Bath and Wells.



Grant funding pot now available for Bath and Wells churches

Churches across Bath and Wells now have an easy way to apply to a £312,850 grant fund pot for projects including growing church and transforming communities, minor repairs and improvements, and net zero initiatives. The fund has been created from a number of sources, including the national church's [Buildings for Mission project](#) and the [Net Zero Carbon Quick Wins](#) grant scheme.

Parishes are invited to apply for the funding using the [online Grant Funding Expressions of Interest form](#). Applications will be reviewed and directed to the most appropriate funding and be signposted to any additional support that may be available from diocesan Support Services.

Jenny Hollingsworth, Diocesan Secretary, says, "Just as parishes are seeking to address their financial challenges by securing funding from a range of available sources, so are we as a diocese. Having identified a significant pot of funding on behalf of our parishes, we wanted to ensure there was a simple and straightforward way of getting all that funding out to those who are seeking to grow their church and transform their communities.

"If you are struggling to balance the increasing costs of repairs and rising energy bills with your plans to be more missional, by completing one form you can potentially access some much-needed funding which will supplement any other fundraising activity you are undertaking. Whether it's helping reduce our environmental impact, strengthening outreach, or maintaining the fabric of our buildings, our hope

is that these grants will offer valuable assistance to parishes working to meet today's challenges and opportunities."

[Find out more.](#)



Bishop Michael shares a letter on assisted dying

Ahead of the parliamentary debate on assisted dying, Bishop Michael has written a letter asking us to consider what such a bill might mean.

"On Friday 29 November, Parliament will debate the legalisation of assisted suicide. MPs will vote on whether to legalise doctors prescribing life-ending drugs to those who are terminally ill. The debate is less than four weeks away and yet the text of the bill has not been published. The debate in Parliament is limited to only five hours. Is this really an appropriate amount of scrutiny for legislation which could fundamentally transform our relationship with death? We risk sleepwalking into an enormous change."

[You can read Bishop Michael's letter in full.](#)



Bishop Ruth set to return home to Bath and Wells in 2025

Bishop Ruth will be returning to Bath and Wells in 2025. It follows the announcement earlier this week (4 November 2024) that the Right Revd Sophie Jelley has been announced as the next Bishop of Coventry.

Commenting on Bishop Ruth's return, Bishop Michael says, "I know that Bishop Ruth's wisdom and experience has been hugely appreciated in Coventry during the last 12 months. I'm intensely proud of the way that Ruth stepped up to help our friends in need there. Ruth undertook this mission with the huge generosity of spirit that is typical of her life and ministry. We are now really looking forward to

giving her a very warm welcome home to Bath and Wells. It will be brilliant to have her back and supporting all that we are doing together to help grow our churches and transform our communities.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Bishop Ruth, and Bishop Sophie and the Diocese of Coventry, during this period of transition."

Bishop Ruth will be leaving Coventry at Christmas and after a break will return to her role as Bishop of Taunton around the end of January.



Diocese mourns the passing of DBF Chair

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the death of Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, Ian Theodoreson. Ian served Bath and Wells as Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance from November 2020.

Bishop Michael says, "Ian has been a wonderful encourager, supporter and counsellor into the life of our diocese as he has served with distinction as Chair of our Diocesan Board of Finance. Ian brought to us great skills, wisdom and understanding - and a wonderful and lively Christian faith. We mourn his passing and shall miss his presence and his friendship immensely. We are thinking about Sally and the family, and holding them in our prayers at this time."

Jenny Hollingsworth, Diocesan Secretary says, "Ian lived a very full life and as a diocese we have had the benefit of that. He always had the grace to listen to all and then gently remind us of the vision that God has for us. I have no doubt that not only will we benefit from his work in restructuring diocesan finances, but so will future generations as we strive to grow our churches, transform communities, and continue to be a Christian presence in all our communities." [Read more.](#)

Independent review into Church's handling of Smyth case published

The independent review by Keith Makin into the Church of England's handling of allegations of serious abuse by the late John Smyth has been published.

The [full review can be read here](#). Links to further information may be found [on the Church of England website](#).

Bishop Michael said, "Having taken time to consider the independent review by Keith Makin into the Church of England's handling of allegations of serious abuse by the late John Smyth, I am shocked and profoundly saddened by its findings. The details revealed highlight issues that cannot be ignored. As a Bishop of the Church of England, I want to express my profound sorrow and apology to those who suffered such appalling abuse at the hands of John Smyth."

Bath and Wells Safeguarding Manager, Ben Goodhind, also shared a reflection following the report's publication. You can [read Ben's reflection online](#).



Safeguarding Sunday: Let's talk about it

Every year, thousands of churches across the country unite to mark Safeguarding Sunday. It's a chance to listen and to talk together about how we can create places and cultures that protect people from the damaging effects of harm and abuse.

The theme for Safeguarding Sunday which takes place on Sunday 17 November 2024 is 'Let's talk about it'. It is an opportunity to come together to explore what safe looks and feels like, and to share all the things your church is doing to make it a safer place for all. [Find out more and download resources.](#)

Exploring Your Spiritual Journey

Exploring Your Spiritual Journey offers an exciting, experiential course in Christian prayer. It is for people of all denominations and none, lay and ordained. The only prerequisite for the course is a desire to discover more about your inner journey and a willingness to encounter God more deeply and in a variety of ways.

We are now registering for 2025. Find out more [about the course and register online.](#)



Ripple Effect Christmas



Church Money Matters

This Christmas, Somerset-based Christian charity, Ripple Effect, is asking churches to support mothers in rural Africa with vital training so they can feed their children, earn enough to send them to school and break the cycle of poverty. The charity (formerly known as Send a Cow) has 36 years experience in helping families in Africa learn more, grow more and sell more.

[Find out more about the Ripple Effect Christmas campaign.](#)

If you are a treasurer or fundraiser for your church, keep your eyes peeled for our new newsletter packed full of useful information to support you in your role. Three newsletters a year are planned and the first one is out now.

[Sign up to receive the newsletter, or any other newsletter issued by Support Services.](#)

Last week the government issued a budget that may have affected your PCC: if you are concerned about the effect on your church and its finances, please [get in contact with the Finance team.](#)



Ouseley Church Music Trust Grant

The Ouseley Church Music Trust's grants range from the smallest parish churches to the biggest cathedrals to support the Anglican choral tradition. Applicants must demonstrate how they will advance choral excellence in worship.

The website www.ouseleytrust.org.uk gives details of the application process and application deadlines. For more information contact Neil Parsons - Email clerk@ouseleytrust.org.uk or call 07912 696852.

New website of the Central Readers' Council (CRC)

www.layministry.org.uk is now live!

The site is being developed by the Central Readers' Council to support Readers/LLMs and all kinds of lay ministry within the Church of England.

You will find stories, resources, and useful information for Wardens, lay ministers, and those exploring Licensed Lay ministry.

If you have comments about the new site, please email chair@transformingministry.co.uk

In brief

- Carnival season is upon us, if you are heading to watch in Wells keep an eye out for two familiar hi-vis vested collectors, Bishop Michael and Dean of Wells, Toby Wright.
- The Community of Hopeweavers Quiet Days in Bath, 30 November 2024, 15 March 2025 & 5 July 2025 St Michael's Within, St John's Foundation, 9:45-4:00. Book via website www.hopeweavers.org.uk
- Download November's [Prayer Calendar](#) and the [Manna mailing.](#)

[If you have news to share, tag us](#) on your social media channel or [email the Communications team.](#)



Youth Light Festival

On Friday, 25 October Bath Abbey was host to an incredible spirit-filled youth festival! Over 150 youths and their leaders from across the diocese joined the Diocesan Youth Light Festival, an extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime evening of light, inspiration and worship. With everyone arrayed in glow-in-the-dark bracelets, the group enjoyed the Luxmuralis light show, listened afterwards to Bishop Michael's inspiring conversation with Go Team Adviser for Wells Archdeaconry and Youth Voice Lead, Cesca Priestley about 'what light looks like in the world', and joined together in worship with amazing music provided by Movement.

The Abbey's Boys/Girls choir members and Abbey youth greeted guests, handing out glow bracelets. In advance of the evening, young people shared their thoughts about light with Bishop Michael considering:

How do you think we can be a light in the world?

Have you ever experienced the light of someone else?

Where do you see light in the world?



Train the Trainer

The Benefice of The Huntspills and Mark benefitted from Foundation Safeguarding Training in East Huntspill Church Hall in person thanks to Sabina Brooks, who completed the "Train the Trainer Course".

This was the first course that Sabina led. In all 13 candidates took part, each said they were delighted to take part in person and be able to discuss the information, issues and points that came up through the course with others in the room. Everyone remarked that it was so much better being able to talk about things rather than being alone in front of a computer screen and wondering if you had understood what you were reading.

Sara Puddy, Safeguarding Officer, All Saints Church, East Huntspill said, "It is really worthwhile persuading a member of your congregation to take the "Train the Trainer Course" and provide in person basic and foundation training, which can benefit not only those people who don't have access to the internet but lots of others who would prefer to be able to talk things through."

If you would like to find out more, about the Train the Trainer course or any other training opportunities, please [get in touch with the Safeguarding team.](#)



FLOURISH in Bath and Wells

Earlier this year the Church of England launched a new network of 40 worshipping communities. The new FLOURISH network will establish partnerships between schools or Further Education colleges and their local churches, aiming to engage a large number of children, young people, and their families. In Bath and Wells, we were successful in securing funding to launch some FLOURISH worshipping communities in St Mark's Church of England Secondary School in, Bath, one across the Lighthouse Multi-Academy Trust and one at Combe Down Church of England Primary School, Bath.

Combe Down Church of England Primary School has used its funds to purchase a gazebo which has been pitched in various locations around the school playgrounds. The children voted for the name of the tent and chose: "The Sanctuary".

The school is using some of its land to create a prayer garden, which will include a shed that the school is hoping can become their Godly Playhouse.

The FLOURISH lead, Claire Morrish, is in the process of identifying families, children and staff who are interested in helping to lead some worship gatherings, with the aim of starting these at the beginning of 2025.

Diocese of Bath and Wells

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